minimal and not reinforce President Zia's administration. The same speakers believed that the Afghan conflict has helped to legitimize the Zia regime and to give the USA an excuse for increasing its presence and influence in the subcontinent. They claimed in addition that Pakistan has not had the freedom to pursue its own interests. It has been constrained by a combination of a US veto in exchange for aid and intransigence on the part of the mujahideen leadership. But the fundamental dilemma, as they saw it, was that whereas the refugees have enjoyed the support of Zia and the USA, the people of Pakistan have been fighting against these two forces.

Domestically, the refugees were perceived as introducing a new, destabilizing factor into Pakistani politics. The fact that Benazir Bhutto had modified her policy on the war was represented as evidence of the influence the mujahideen were able to exercise. There had been reports that the refugees were trying to establish links with local parties, including Jamia't Islami and the proponents of Pashtunistan. If these were proved to be true, Pakistanis might conclude that their guests were interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan as well as contributing to the polarization of local opinion. It was claimed that there was already evidence of abuses of hospitality by Afghans, ranging from common smuggling to armed robbery and drug trafficking.

Refugee leaders were urged to take into account these Pakistani concerns and to consider what might be done to reduce tensions. In this context, it was suggested that they should not place too much reliance on the obligations of Islam. There was deep suspicion of the feudal ideology of some Afghan parties, which seemed intent on creating in Afghanistan the kind of Islamic state that was anathema to the majority of Pakistanis. A campaign was needed to win the battle for the minds of the ordinary people of Pakistan who, incredible though it might seem, were now looking favourably over the Afghan border to see just who was taking a firm line against fundamentalism and feudalism. It was stressed that more could be done through the press and other media independent of the Pakistan government to get the refugees' message across.

The Afghan response to the discussion of these issues was equally frank. They explained that, although Pakistan bore the heaviest burden, the war imposed pressures on many other countries. A good number of nations have been embarrassed at having the Soviet Union's excesses and ambitions exposed and have resented being confronted with difficult choices. They, too, have tended to blame the Afghans for their discomfiture. Pakistanis were asked to bear in mind that as their dissatisfaction with their military rulers pre-dated the outbreak of the Afghan conflict, it was unfair to blame the refugees for all Pakistan's ills. The Islamic movement was a world phenomenon, not solely the pursuit of Afghans. Virtually any government that ruled in Islamabad would consider itself bound to support the cause of freedom in Afghanistan, and not simply out of Islamic solidarity. The internal political debate in Pakistan should, for these reasons, be seen as a military versus civilian dispute rather than an Afghan issue.

Participants were assured that the refugees were grateful for the hospitality and support extended to them by their neighbours. The situation in the camps in Pakistan was described as the migration of one nation to another. Afghans realized the problems generated by their presence and would try not to add to them. Meanwhile, they appealed for understanding and acknowledgement that these were side effects of a greater wrong. At root the problem was Soviet aggression aimed at crushing the independence of a small country and eradicating the identity of a people. It was therefore right for the resistance to accept help from wherever it came, including from the USA. This did not, as some Pakistani observers claimed, amount to choosing between the super-powers: the issue has remained essentially one of independence. One speaker claimed to see a similarity between the current situation in Pakistan and that in Afghanistan during 1972-79. He and others referred to the Soviet Union's demonstrated lack of respect for the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries. They argued that if the Soviet threat were not recognized today, tomorrow it would have to be confronted. There was, in their

view, a common Afghan/Pakistani interest in opposing a communist regime inimical to Islam. The present war was being fought not only in defence of Afghanistan, but also in defence of Pakistan's borders. They felt that if one succumbed, the other would quickly follow. In that sense, it was claimed, the mujahideen resistance was performing the duties of a regional peace-keeping force.

As to the drugs offences refugees had been accused of committing, their leaders were satisfied that these were minor incidents mainly involving truck drivers motivated by greed. They were neither inspired nor condoned by the refugees as a community. Rumours to the effect that Afghan political parties were involved had been thoroughly investigated by Interpol and the Pakistani authorities, neither of which had discovered any substantiating evidence.

At the outset of the session, participants had been invited to address the question of repatriation, forced and voluntary. It was alleged that repatriation was the preferred solution to refugee problems world-wide and strongly endorsed by most donor agencies. Attention was drawn also to Pakistani fears that the longer refugees remained in the camps the more likely it was that they would be reluctant to return home. Humanitarian aid provided by Western agencies could, in this context, be viewed as an incentive to remain a refugee. Surprisingly few Afghans chose to respond to these points: perhaps because to do so would be interpreted as an admission that repatriation was a respectable option. Those who did speak were adamant that the vast majority of refugees would return willingly to their homeland - but on their own terms, not on conditions imposed by others. They insisted Pakistanis should take comfort in the Bangladesh precedent, notwithstanding the fact that Bangladeshi refugees had been sheltered in India for little more than a year.

The case for establishing an Afghan Free University in Pakistan was, by contrast, discussed at some length. An earlier proposal for setting up such a facility in the North West Frontier Province had failed to get off the ground largely because of local political objections. This has not, however, deterred

the refugees, who have continued to call for higher education on a large scale and believe the demand can be met only by creating their own separate university. Language difficulties present a major obstacle to attendance at Pakistani institutions, even with the optimistic assumption that sufficient places could be specifically allocated to Afghans. Another consideration is the availability of many unemployed Afghan professors and lecturers. Strongly opposing this whole idea, a Pakistani academic argued in favour of attendance at existing universities in Pakistan. Apart from the obvious political difficulties of extending yet more special treatment to refugees, he was convinced that Afghans are in danger of getting matters out of perspective. Pakistan spent as little as 2 per cent of its GDP on education, one of the lowest proportions in the world. Given this situation, he thought it prudent not to seek priority for sectional interests, but to concentrate on the needs of Pakistan as a whole.

There was only very limited discussion of the standard of living for Afghan refugees in Iran, where no permanent camps existed. After an initial brief stay in a reception centre, new arrivals have been obliged to move on to districts where work might be available. Unlike Pakistan, Iran has given little or no financial support to individuals and few aid agencies are active. Refugees have therefore to fend for themselves and are, as a result, more independent than their compatriots in Pakistan. The other side of the coin has been that they have tended to suffer greater hardship.

## Aid Agencies

The presence at the symposium of representatives of a wide range of voluntary agencies permitted an informed debate on the role and effectiveness of refugee relief programmes. Discussion concentrated mainly on ways in which the delivery and management of international aid might be improved. A number of problems were highlighted, including the acute shortage of cash income, the demoralizing effects of aid dependency, and the need for refugees to knock on

several doors before receiving help. It was thought that more could be done to promote self-reliance. Co-ordination of the work of individual agencies was identified as another problem area. Some attempts have been made to improve procedures, notably by those agencies involved in cross-border work and by the UNHCR, but much remains to be done. Factors which have operated against a more efficient system are a lack of trained manpower, and inter-agency rivalries and jealousies.

Education and training were two sectors in which it was felt that aid agencies could improve their performance. There was a strong appeal for funds to be allocated to the creation of schools for girls in Peshawar, as well as to the development of an appropriate curriculum for all Afghan schoolchildren. Engineers, agronomists, and 'bare-foot' doctors had to be trained in greater numbers for work inside Afghanistan. For practical reasons, it was recommended that candidates for this type of training be recruited through mujahideen field commanders.

There was general agreement that, wherever possible, refugees should remain inside Afghanistan. Immigration was felt to be justified only when military pressures or other adverse conditions made it unavoidable. If more could be done to direct aid to needy groups within the country, the flood of refugees could be significantly reduced. There was sound evidence that refugees could be sustained and protected in several districts, provided supplies of food, seeds, and other necessities were assured. The Swedish and Norwegian aid committees had favourable experience of working with commanders in this way, and commended the practice to other agencies.

More controversially, two spokesmen for the people inside Afghanistan demanded better accountability from the principal Afghan recipients of overseas aid. They alleged that too much was being channelled through political parties in Peshawar and too little was going direct to resistance leaders like themselves inside Afghanistan. Voluntary agencies should be required to state publicly the amounts transferred to the parties, who in turn must be compelled

to account for them. These spokesmen said they had been driven to speak out as a response to the disruption and suspicion engendered by the behaviour of the parties. They were conscious that in so doing they risked exposing the divisions and weaknesses within the resistance movement which others would prefer to cover up, but believed they had been left with no alternative.

Role of the Media

Frustration was vented over the inadequacy of media coverage of the Afghan conflict in the West. World opinion was seen to be crucial to the resolution of the dispute, yet few countries have any clear idea of what is going on. The absence of regular TV coverage has been, in this respect, a major handicap. The degree and quality of reporting tended to vary enormously between countries. In Europe, Britain was agreed to be behind West Germany and France in both depth and accuracy. Overall, western public opinion has appeared to be apathetic to the plight of the refugees. To some observers, there has been a lack of proportion in press coverage of foreign affairs: events in South Africa, for example, have attracted much more attention than the long-running Afghan war. The moral dimensions of the tragedy have been almost entirely ignored.

According to an Alliance spokesman, part of the trouble has been that western journalists seem interested only in brutalities. They have reported what they could sell and ignored other issues. He also accused them of having been instrumental in creating discord among the resistance: of being aligned to one group and antagonistic to another.

Other speakers argued that the picture was not wholly negative. The mujahideen have been the only Muslim fighters in history to get a good press in the West. Journalists might at times have been indifferent, but rarely cynical. Their indifference has in any case been relative: they did, after all, live in a world in which there were other tragedies. Press coverage remained important to the refugee, even if reports were occasionally critical

of the mujahideen. It was unreasonable to expect professional reporters to ignore divisions or pretend they did not exist.

One journalist with wide experience of war reporting explained that the Afghan conflict is an unusually difficult one to cover. The nature of the fighting and the inaccessibility of the country has created special problems. He contrasted this situation with the Gulf war, which is taking place in more or less fixed positions easily and quickly reached by the international media. In Vietnam too, the access to battlefields and instant communications had been relatively simple with the help of the US forces. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, it is possible to go for weeks without actually seeing any action. He also challenged the assumption that the media had unlimited funds and no other worthwhile stories to cover. In his experience, cost-effectiveness and limitations on space were ever-present constraints on foreign news coverage. The harsh reality was that Afghanistan had to compete with the Gulf war and such tragic events as major earthquakes for these scarce resources.

For the future, participants expressed the hope that journalists would pay some attention to the moral aspects of the conflict. They have a duty to help arouse world consciousness to Soviet inhumanity. Voluntary and humanitarian agencies also have a role to play in this area. Academics were urged to ensure that their work was related to contemporary issues and their findings made readily available to the media. It was suggested that they far too often worked without regard to current relevance.

## International Implications

The papers presented by key speakers which were aimed at placing the conflict in an international context inspired a lively exchange of views. There was much talk of the merits and drawbacks of the 'Finlandization' of Afghanistan and of the special interests of the super-powers. One speaker decried the tendency to present the conflict in a single dimension: one war with two sides, the West for the mujahideen, the East against. The reality, as he saw

it, was two-dimensional: the military conflict on the one hand, and the 'war of images' on the other. He described the latter as the political war in which Afghans enjoyed no outside support, with both East and West opposed to Islam and working for the marginalization of the resistance movements. The United Nations were praised for their efforts in promoting a negotiated settlement, but condemned for denying the mujahideen the opportunity to participate in the Geneva peace talks process. There was a call for the UN to widen the scope of the talks and to allow the resistance movement to occupy Afghanistan's seat in the General Assembly. The motives and policies of some of the countries involved in the dispute came in for particular scrutiny. It was claimed that Iran would be in a stronger position to back the mujahideen once its war with Iraq had been brought to a close. China, on the other hand, might well reconsider its policy of support for the resistance in the event that its relations with the Soviet Union improved. But, predictably, it was the attitudes of the three main foreign actors on the Afghan stage that commanded most attention - Russia, the US, and Pakistan.

Consideration of Pakistan's role led to speculation that the Zia administration might at some stage choose to modify its stance, perhaps even to the extent of withholding support from the resistance. It was suggested that this might be an attractive proposition in the event that the Soviet Union brought increased military pressure to bear on Pakistan. Indeed, there was a belief in some quarters that Pakistan would by now have gone some way to appeasing the Soviet Union but for the anticipated adverse reaction of the US ally. Even so, it was felt that Pakistan could not and would not wish to engage in a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union over Afghanistan. However unlikely the scenario, it was thought that Zia might even be persuaded to change course were Gorbachev to offer to supplant the US as the main provider of aid and military assistance to Pakistan and to influence India to negotiate a 'no war pact' with its neighbour. In these circumstances, some

commentators thought it would be imprudent for the Afghan resistance to assume that the obligations of Islam would prove an effective deterrent.

A number of ambiguities were identified in the Soviet position. It was agreed that the Gorbachev administration has seemed to have different priorities from its predecessors and has seen itself over-extended in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union has suffered enormous losses, both of men and of materials, and has been humiliated politically. There have been encouraging signs that it is now seeking a way out, even though some difficult decisions still have to be faced. Major concerns are the logistics of departure and the fate of the PDPA regime, both of which could determine withdrawal strategy. Against this, other developments have raised doubts about the supposed imminence of a pull-out. There has been, for example, growing evidence that the Soviets have been playing for time in order to shore-up the PDPA. The viciousness of Soviet methods has been stepped up since the advent of Gorbachev. Above all, they have made it plain that they have no intention of suing for peace. In some respects, indeed, the Soviet position has improved, as evidenced by the strengthening of their hold on the institutional structure of Afghanistan and the quickening pace of Sovietization. Moreover, they have closed the main resistance supply routes, reduced the number of forward bases, and forced the mujahideen to operate largely from the camps in Pakistan. Against this background, participants suspected that Soviet talk about peace has had nothing whatever to do with peace for the people of Afghanistan and everything to do with peace for the Soviet Union on its terms. Nor have the Soviets had any regrets about the suffering endured by Afghans; their only regrets have been that their efforts to subdue the country had not brought greater success.

A key speaker observed that any assumption on the part of the mujahideen that their position would automatically improve with the passage of time was naive and betrayed a lack of understanding of the Soviet mentality. Victory should not be taken for granted. The Soviets were capable of enormous

repression and had no domestic pressures to take into account. He saw Gorbachev as on the defensive in this and other areas of Soviet policy where he was pressing for change. So far as Afghanistan was concerned, if no progress were made in the next year, there was every likelihood that the hawks in Moscow would call for a review of policy. He urged the resistance leadership to face up to this reality and to listen carefully to current proposals for a staged withdrawal of Soviet forces. Rather than reject these out of hand, it made more sense to stake out a position in which terms for treating with the PDPA were defined in advance. If the resistance were as strong and the PDPA as weak as the mujahideen had claimed, they had nothing to fear from a phased settlement. The alternative might be increased Sovietization and greater Soviet involvement in the war.

A number of speakers depicted US policy as being essentially self-interested. They claimed that it has suited the US to catch the Soviets on the wrong foot and that it did not cost the US taxpayer much to watch them bleed to death. The point was made that the Afghan conflict is the only area in which the US found itself on the same side as Islam. It was further suggested that US backing could be dropped at any moment should the super-powers strike a deal in, say, Central America. At present, US support was considered insufficient to enable the resistance to win the war outright. Direct involvement was necessary for that, but unlikely because of the wider implications for super-power relations.

It was widely accepted that US policy is not at present clear-cut. There are two different schools of thought on the subject in Washington, neither of which view the war principally in terms of a human tragedy. The anti-communist, anti-arms control lobby favoured support for the Afghan resistance basically on the grounds that it should be encouraged in its fight against Soviet imperialism. The so-called 'limited war school' is almost exclusively concerned with the military commitment to Pakistan and believes it necessary to give only such aid to the resistance as is consistent with furthering

## Introduction

Under the co-sponsorship of the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) and the Department of Ethnology and Prehistory, an international symposium on the domestic and foreign implications of migration from Afghanistan was held at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, from 29 March to 2 April 1987.

Funding for the symposium was provided principally by The Rockefeller Foundation, the British Foreign Office, the Swedish Red Cross, OXFAM, the Saudi Arabian government, and the US government.

The content of the programme was developed by a symposium committee comprising Belinda Allan, Dr. B. E. Harrell-Bond, Dr. Schuyler Jones, Violaine Junod, Neville Maxwell, Nabi Misdaq, Sayed Mousavi, Dr. Jadwiga Pstrusinska, and Dr. Nancy Tapper. Linda Agerbak administered the symposium. She was assisted by RSP staff.

Individual sessions were chaired by Schuyler Jones, Barbara Harrell-Bond, Nancy Tapper, Nabi Misdaq, Sandy Gall, Michael Harris, Randolph Kent, Edward Mortimer, and Adam Roberts.

The main objective of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for open debate which focused on a number of key topics introduced by thirty invited speakers. In addition, a series of workshops and round tables were charged with discussing in more detail the issues and themes that emerged in the course of the symposium and producing recommendations and resolutions for consideration at the final session.

An exhibition of books, handicrafts, paintings, and photographs, a film show, and a cultural evening were held in association with the symposium. The RSP wishes to thank the musicans, John Baily, Veronica Doubleday, Rahmat Simab, Habib Farid and his band and Ian MacDonald who organized the book exhibition. The RSP especially thanks Okenden Venture, Anne Kesteron, and Nasrullah Saifi, of Takhar Attire, for lending the symposium a large collection of handicrafts from Afghanistan for the exhibition.

Pakistan's national interests. An American speaker said that the US government's present policy, at its simplest, is to promote the principle of self-determination for Afghans. The preferred mechanism for achieving this would be the withdrawal of Soviet forces. At the same time, the US is not especially opposed to the PDPA administration remaining in place. But it would expect to see a more representative government emerge in Kabul in due course, with mujahideen participation.

The same American speaker suggested that although the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism is viewed with some concern by the US government, it would be wrong to assume that it has greatly influenced policy on Afghanistan. It is true that the allocation of US aid to the various Afghan factions is left to the Pakistan government as the party most directly concerned. But it is equally true that the principal beneficiaries have been the most consciously Islamic members of the Alliances. This distribution has not been made, or approved, by the US. On the contrary, it has provoked concern in some quarters. The continuing divisions within the Alliances have been a particular disappointment to the US because they undermine the military effectiveness and political credibility of the resistance movement. This was seen as a question that will assume even more significance as negotiations on a settlement develop.

## Political Future of Afghanistan

The recent Soviet initiative for a settlement based on a programme of 'national reconciliation' was considered to be seriously flawed. Nobody had confidence in this attempt at Pax Sovietica or thought that it merited any reduction in the pressures currently being applied against the Soviet Union. The resistance were credited with having an excellent chance of winning through, provided Pakistan and the West continued to help in constructive ways. If, for any reason, such support ceased, it would be regrettable, but it would not be the end of the struggle. The mujahideen would continue to fight, if necessary from

insecure bases within Afghanistan. In such an event, the inevitably heavier losses of life would be the responsibility not solely of the Soviet Union, but of the entire world. A US State Department spokesman assured participants that it was extremely unlikely that the US would ever abandon the resistance. Apart from strategic considerations, the US government's policy has enjoyed popular and bipartisan political support. Indeed, the tendency in Congress has been to do more, not less, for the resistance. In his view, similar factors applied in Pakistan. Not only Pakistan's Islamic obligations, but self-interest dictated this. The Pakistani government and the Alliance leaders might at times differ on tactics and detail, but their objectives were essentially identical. As to the intentions of the Soviet Union, he saw a mixed picture. There have been some encouraging noises indicating a willingness to take negotiating risks in the context of the UN-sponsored peace talks and to drop the idea of making withdrawal conditional on any internal Afghan development. But recent deeds, including a more brutal prosecution of the war inside the country and attacks against Pakistani territory, would suggest otherwise. On balance, he was inclined to believe that if international pressure were to continue and the opportunity of a settlement on reasonable terms to present itself, the Soviets would eventually pull out.

There was general, if reluctant, acceptance on the part of those Afghans present that rapid progress would be difficult to achieve without a reasonable degree of unity. A proposal that the resistance should try to find unity through the search for a common ideology, instead of jockeying to win support for individual leaders, received some backing. However, others insisted that there has been neither a leadership vacuum nor a total absence of unity. This group pointed out that the unity represented by the Alliances has been hard-earned. It has been achieved only because the constituent parties have agreed to retain their own identities, as well as to be bound to a common line on certain major issues, including the need for an Islamic government in Kabul.

At present,the Alliances' unity is incomplete, but in time it would be total. Remaining differences were small and could be addressed later.

On the subject of Islam, Afghan speakers expressed confidence that it could form the basis of a new democratic society in Afghanistan. Islam was described as a complete ideology, encompassing all aspects of life: religious, political, economic, and cultural. The negative connotations of Islam prevalent in the West were rejected. The West was asked to accept the validity of an ideology that has inspired and invigorated the resistance and is now a reality in world affairs. It should not be dismissed simply because it was feared or disliked.

There was unanimity among Afghans that the Alliances should be directly involved in negotiating a settlement. It was pointed out that because the Soviet Union dictates PDPA policy, and since the government of Pakistan speaks only for itself, the Alliances are the only interested parties denied participation in the Geneva process. The role of the Pakistani government was appreciated by Afghans. In some respects it has done more to safeguard their interests than the Alliances had expected. But Pakistan does not in fact speak for the resistance, who are now capable of representing themselves. A few Afghans thought there is a case for the resistance's taking advantage of the Geneva talks to secure the best possible deal. However, according to a resistance spokesman, the only negotiating format acceptable to them would be direct talks between the Alliances and the Soviet Union. The aim of the resistance as of now is the total, unconditional withdrawal of Soviet forces. 'Finlandization' would not be acceptable under any circumstances, and neither would any other solution dreamed up by the super-powers against the wishes of the resistance. The world has seen that the Soviet Union is not invincible. It has already suffered defeat ideologically and politically as a precursor to military defeat. Continuing military pressure inside Afghanistan will in due course, and probably within a year, bring it to the negotiating table.

The resistance are equally determined to have no dealings with the PDPA regime. They emphatically reject estimates that there are as many as 30.000 hard-core communist activists in Afghanistan loyal to the regime. At most, the PDPA represents a few thousand people, who deserve no special consideration. As an organization it is now weaker than ever, split into three factions, not two as before. Without the support of Soviet troops, its position would be untenable. It would last no longer than 'five minutes'. No matter what foreign brokers might say, having fought the communists for nine years, the resistance has no intention of working or negotiating with them now or in the future. Such collaboration would only provide a pretext for future Soviet intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan.

There was markedly less Afghan solidarity on the question of a postwar government. Attention was drawn to a report of the Alliances on the form of a future interim government, the contents of which have still to be published. It came as no surprise that this long-overdue report had been delayed pending the resolution of some differences of detail among the seven parties. A Hizb-e Islami spokesman said that his party for one was adamant that free elections should be held between parties, not individuals, and on the basis of proportional representation. He saw no role in this process for aristocrats or westernized Afghans who might entertain hopes of returning home to steal the victory being won by the sacrifices of the mujahideen. Nor was he prepared to accept that there might be a role for former King Zahir Shah in any transitional government. This latter point met with opposition from other Afghans who, regardless of their own personal views, were prepared to acknowledge that the return of Zahir Shah was at least a possibility. They also argued that Hizb-e Islami's vigorous response to the suggestion amounted to an admission that they too were aware that this might well be an element in any eventual settlement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The workshops, run in parallel with the symposium, addressed themselves to the following topics: ethnicity in Afghanistan; Afghan women refugees; 'What is to be done next?' (Farsi/Pashtu workshop); negotiating a settlement; Information and Media; Relief Agencies; and the Future of Afghan and Research Priorities in Refugee Studies. The reports of the workshops must be considered in the light of the varying participation in each. All but one of the Afghan participants attended the workshop, 'What is to be done next?' which coincided with the workshop, Negotiating a Settlement. No Afghans or Pakistanis attended the workshop on the Future of Afghan Studies. On a separate occasion the academics gathered to consider priorities in research on refugees. Pakistani representatives met together to formulate their own report.

Each workshop chairperson reported separately to the concluding plenary session on its proceedings. Originally, it had been intended that these reports and, where appropriate, associated recommendations and resolutions, should be debated in full and formally adopted by the symposium. However, pressure of time and the extremely comprehensive nature of the reports, allied to the large number of prospective speakers, conspired to make this impossible.

In the event, the only report which was considered at any length in plenary was that entitled 'Negotiating a settlement'. After much heated discussion, participants failed to agree on the text of a resolution setting out the symposium's view of the settlement negotiations. The main stumbling-block to general consensus was the draft resolution that emerged from the workshop, which was condemned by one Alliance spokesmen for being too weak and couched in unacceptably diplomatic language. Their own proposal for a resolution unambiguously supportive of the Alliance's attitude to a settlement in turn proved unacceptable to the symposium as a whole. As noted, the recommendations proposals put forward by the other workshops were simply reported to the final plenary session

**APPENDIX: WORKSHOP REPORTS**

Ethnicity

We were a group of 21 who met for a single workshop session. Our discussion was wide-ranging and inevitably only a preliminary exploration. None of us had any doubts about the importance of the topic of ethnicity and its sensitivity. Its potentially explosive nature was revealed in the first of the plenary sessions. Since then we have seen an understandable reluctance on the part of Afghans and others to discuss publicly questions of ethnicity and minority rights today or as they might emerge in Afghanistan in the future. These issues are ones which may widen differences within the Afghan community. However, it was the feeling of the workshop group that it is time to take a longer-term view of Afghan ethnicity. We would like to suggest that the discussion of ethnic issues should now become part of the public discourse. In this light, we would like to put three recommendations before the conference.

1.) First, to prepare for the debate on ethnicity which must be part of the development of a new Afghanistan, we suggest simply that Afghans and others actively seek to discuss at every opportunity the issues related to a united multicultural Afghanistan.

The kinds of questions raised in the workshop included:

- In the new Afghanistan, what degree of cultural/national uniformity is to be sought? Or, to what extent are distinct cultural traditions to be protected and encouraged?
- If a popular government is to be formed in Afghanistan, on what basis will proportional or other representation be achieved? Can this be done in terms other than ethnicity? And if so, how? Or, if cultural groups are to be distinguished, what criteria will be used? How, for example, will a national census be done? What categories will be relevant: qaum, tayfa, mazhab, zaban ...? And if representation is done in terms of cultural identity, how will the rights of the smallest cultural groups be secured? There are many other questions of this order, e.g. if a federal

state system is sought, what language will be appropriate as the lingua franca for the central state itself?

- Similarly, if equality of economic, political and educational, etc. opportunity is sought, can this be done without reference to cultural identity? And, if not, how can equal opportunity for members of all cultural groups be fostered?

2.) The war has fundamentally changed the relations between ethnic groups. We would ask people to consider what symbols might be elaborated as the basis of a new national identity?

Islam will provide many of these, but are there some traditional symbols not associated with the earlier inequalities in Afghan society, which can be developed? For instance, could the institution of the Loya Jirga [Majlis-e-Saura-i-Milli] be one of these? And finally, can new cultural symbols, derived from the war experience itself, serve to redefine relations between the diverse peoples of Afghanistan

3.) We felt that the information on the past and present situations of the peoples of Afghanistan is extremely uneven. Our third recommendation is that there should be practical support for the study of the many different Afghan communities and their distinct cultural traditions by those who may belong to them.

We would encourage the collection of local histories, as well as accounts of war experiences both among refugee groups and within Afghanistan, where the Soviet-style nationalities policy is being used to divide the population and to devalue their cultural traditions by reducing them to vehicles for propaganda or to folklore. Studies of language and custom, both in the past and in the present might suggest the kinds and magnitude of social changes which have come about, as would studies of the demography, economics and politics of communities throughout the recent period.

Sponsorship for such work might come from western universities as well as from Afghan support groups of all kinds. The aim would be to create a body of

work by Afghans which could be used by Afghans in educational programmes now and in the future.

**FACTS:**

- Afghanistan is a multicultural country: Pashtun, Hazara, Tajiks, Uzhiks, Turkmans, Nooristani, Baluoch, etc.
- Injustices have been inflicted upon the ethnic groups by the rulers (previous regime, and present regime). They used the policy of divide and rule, inspired by foreign hands.
- Peoples of Afghanistan have lived as brothers of the same family particularly under the present circumstances of national liberation war against the superpower Russians.

Taking the above facts into consideration, and regarding the right of freedom, justice and equality for ethnic groups, two suggestions should be considered significant for the future Afghanistan:

1.) A federation of various ethnic groups (above-mentioned) should be established with internal autonomy to handle their own specific affairs. This should not/does not mean sectarianism. Integrity of Afghanistan (multicultural/federal) is very important as well.

2.) The united and equal units of the federation would then constitute a federal Islamic republic of Afghanistan. The proportional representation of the units of federation will form the central democratic government.

- Active members of the ethnic groups should be encouraged to research/locate information/data about their own ethnic groups in order to preserve their values and use them for future needs. Study opportunities should be provided for such research on ethnic groups, as mentioned above.

<u>Afghan women refugees</u>

I RESOLVED: that because it is a violation of the guiding principle that no refugee be left without support.

a) means should be sought to ensure that the voices of all women are heard; and

b) the solutions to problems identified by women be enhanced through their involvement in planning and implementing process; and

c) a variety of programmes should be offered to

i: refugees residing in refugee villages;

ii: refugees residing in urban areas;

iii: civilians living inside Afghanistan.

II RESOLVED: that concerted efforts be made to expand programmes already functioning successfully, and to explore a wider variety of options for meaningful activities in order to:

a) provide a mutual support network through group gatherings at such places as Mother/Child Health Centres where social exchanges can be combined with health education;

b) train nurses, traditional birth attendants and health workers so that women may assist in safe home deliveries and expand primary, preventative and public health education beyond the clinics;

c) identify natural leaders capable of referring needy cases, seeking out default patients, urging mothers to follow-up immunization series and register for apre-natal and ante-natal care;

d) determine educational needs and personnel resources; and provide teacher training assistance;

e) develop innovative education techniques and visual aids, in addition to textbooks, such as cassettes, filmstrips and textile posters, for use in educational institutions at all levels, together with a regular, reliable supply system to all girls' schools.

III RESOLVED: to attempt to find a solution to the problems of Afghan refugee women in Britain and other countries, through the establishment of an Afghan Women's Association, details to be discussed later.

What is to be done next? (Workshop in Farsi and Pastu)

Main participants were eminent Afghan writers, politicians and academics.

Resolutions:

1. In view of the vacuum in leadership, a Grand Council or Loi Jerga, in accordance with Afghan tradition, should be called to select a person to lead an interim government.

2. Pressure should be exerted on the present seven leaders in Peshawar so they can put forward one leader for the purpose of an interim govt.

3. In view of the lack of an electoral infrastructure in Afghanistan, it was suggested that a representative sample of Afghan minorities and ethnic groups, selected on the basis of the size of their populations, should be elected, and that these representatives should form a Loi Jerga so that the Council could then decide on an interim government.

4. A suggestion was made that commanders in Afghanistan who are known to local groups should be asked to come to Peshawar from the provinces and should form 50 per cent of an Loi Jerga for the purposes of an interim government. The remaining half should be formed by holding elections in the camps in Pakistan and Iran.

5. A group of eminent Afghan scholars, preferably based in Pakistan, should be formed to act as a pressure group by canvassing opinion in USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and at the UN in order that pressure could be exerted on the seven leaders in Peshawar through the Pakistani goverment to unite and form an interim goverment.

6. The procedure for forming an interim goverment and the settlement in general should be left entirely to Afghans residing in Afghanistan itself. They have suffered and waged war for all these years and priority should be given to them.

Some 180 people from 20 countries registered for the symposium, though maximum attendance at any single session was in the region of 150. The Afghan presence was particularly strong and included representatives of the national resistance movement from both inside Afghanistan and refugee camps in Pakistan, but unfortunately noone from Iran was able to attend. The academics in attendance reflected the interdisciplinary character of the symposium. Other participants included agency personnel, diplomats, and journalists.

## Theme of Symposium

Because of the present warfare in Afghanistan, an estimated one third of the population have been forced to flee their homelands. These refugees are the results of profound and seemingly intractable conflicts which affect and are affected by domestic, regional and global politics, wherein lies a real threat of the extinction of the Afghani people. The exodus has been referred to as 'migratory genocide'.

The majority have sought refuge in Iran and Pakistan, where their presence raises enormous political, social, economic, and strategic issues. Large refugee populations inevitably have profound consequences on the economies of host governments; despite the generous response of donors, the hosts usually carry the greatest burden of their assistance.

Policy-makers, including both hosts and international agencies, urgently need further data to guide their work if relief programmes are to alleviate refugee suffering effectively. Dissemination of information about the Afghan populations living in exile will also contribute to the understanding of specific refugee problems and contribute to general knowledge of forced migration.

## Objectives of Symposium

1. To assess the state of current knowledge about the migration of Afghans to Pakistan and Iran in a comparative context;
2. To identify the critical material and non-material needs of the displaced

Negotiating a settlement: aims, progress, possibilities

RESOLUTION

This international symposium supports the United Nations Secretary General's efforts to find a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan on the basis of the principles set out in successive United Nations resolutions. We see no reason to take seriously the programme of national reconciliation proposed by the PDPA government.

We applaud the generosity and hospitality extended by the government and people of Pakistan to Afghan refugees and condemn the continuing violations of Pakistan's border and acts of subversion on Pakistan territory.

We support the findings and conclusions of the Ermacora Report on the violation of human rights in Afghanistan.

We call for steps to achieve the establishment of a government truly representative of all the Afghan people.

We urge the United Nations to find means of involving the Afghan national resistance more directly in the implementation of United Nations resolutions, without which a stable settlement acceptable to the Afghan people cannot be achieved.

Pakistani note of dissent on negotiations

1. We affirm that it is the ultimate desire of many refugees to return home. We condemn any attempts by anyone to obstruct the voluntary return of refugees.

2. We affirm that the solution of the Afdghan war must be through negotiations. In this context it would be irresponsible to reject current efforts to broaden the base of the Afghan regime.

3. We condemn continuing violation of human rights, of Pakistani borders and territory, and any acts of subversion in Pakistan, by whosoever they are committed.

4. We acknowledge the existence of vested interests in both the American and Pakistani regimes which would seek to prolong the Afghan war. We dondemn efforts to exploit the Afghan resistance, simply to inflict maximum military losses on the Soviets. We call upon the Pakistani negotiators to accept the earliest feasible settlement.

Since we are not parties to the conflict, all that we demand is that UN conditions be met.

Pakistani note of dissent on refugee and host relations

1. We call upon the refugees to refrain from interventions in Pakistani domestic politics.

2. We consider the presence of large concentrations of Afghan in urban centres is a threat to stability. We call upon the Pakistani government to confine refugees to the camps where all services should be provided.

3. We remind both the refugees and the Pakistani government that immovable assets cannot be sold to non-nationals. This law must be enforced, and squatting must not be tolerated.

4. We call upon the Afghan resistance to involve themselves in ensuring that refugees inside Pakistan obey the laws of the country. We condemn the involvement of some refugees in the narcotics trade and in the resale of US weapons.

Information and media

Members of this workshop were in basic agreement over many gaps and deficiencies in media coverage of the situation in Afghanistan.

Greater media coverage, especially on TV is vital if a wider public awareness is to grow of the extent of human suffering of the Afghan people. We would like to see as much attention paid to the human rights aspects as to the political and military scene. The media have effectively focused attention on many other situations of war and famine in the past.

The degree and quality of coverage of Afghanistan varies a great deal from country to country. Many members felt that Britain lagged behind West Germany, France and other West European countries.

There should be an effort to get across to journalists and editors that this war is a very serious conflict - its scale reflected in the fact that it was being waged by a superpower - and that the media have, by and large, failed so far to cover it at all adequately. Much of the material still comes from just a few of the 29 provinces of the country. Those few experts and specialists of various types dealing with Afghanistan have a special responsibility in regard to keeping alive public awareness of the conflict and the situation of the civilian population.

The various initiatives to train Afghan cameramen and journalists to produce news material are very welcome, and should help provide coverage of wider scope, of the destruction and killings inside Afghanistan, as well as of the fighting itself. The professional quality and newsworthiness of such material is absolutely essential, though, and lacking till now.

Increasing coordination of information activites by many of the voluntary organisations working for Afghan relief is greatly to be welcomed.

Many opportunities exist for sharing the costs and efforts of information/publicity work to enlighten the public: joint preperation and publication of booklets, pamphlets, rapid translation of suitable pamphlets.

Targets for educational work should include schools as well as general bodies and associations such as political/cultural societies, trade unions,etc.

In at least one country (Denmark), the national Refugee Council has already produced a booklet (in a series) for schools on the background of Afghan refugees, together with back-up materials. Audio-visual material, slides as well as special maps illustrating particular aspects of the refugee problems are essential for creation of greater public awareness. Some of these materials are already available, and only need wider circulation - or, in some

cases, translation - to become useful for campaigning purposes by many more national committees and lobbying groups.

Relief agencies

Recommendations-

1. Relief agencies - foreign voluntary and aid organisations should not impose their way of assistance needed for refugees not inside Afghanistan. They should rather ask the Afghans first for their requirements and needs before they start launching a programme.

2. Second, competition and lack of co-ordination among foreign agencies causes overlap, duplication and damage to the morale of Afghans working both inside Afghanistan or with Afghan refugees.

3. The commission for Afghan refugees in United Nations High Commission for refugees should try to impose the limited or the framework which they have worked out already.

4. All agencies should accept or must accept this framework and these regulations and pay salaries according to the decided regulations. It was stressed that the foreign agencies should have regular co-ordination meetings. I just wanted to give one example for payment of high salaries. The payment of high salaries to those working with refugees especially in Afghanistan will result in a higher standard of life for those during the war and will make them very difficult to get back to Afghanistan and to start living with a minimum standard of existence.

5. Voluntary agencies should expand their programmes inside Afghanistan and increase their efforts greatly.

6. The International Organizations should expand their programmes for refugees allowing the voluntary agencies to concentrate on inside Afghanistan.

7. A major effect of the war as is always is the total destruction of education which is an extremely important factor. Only approximately 10

per cent of refugee children of school age have access to some sort of education. The number inside Afghanistan is unknown but must be far less than the figure among refugees. Therefore a bigger effort is needed for expansion of education programmes for refugees as well as inside Afghanistan.

8. Curriculum must be determined by Afghans themselves to be acceptable for all Afghans - refugees as well as those living inside Afghanistan. And, as example, the Afghan education committee which was mentioned already by Anders have a board of education with majority of Afghans there. With respect to the tradition and religion, education for girls must not be ignored. Education is a fundamental human right and a whole generation growing without it at the moment. This has enormous implications for the future of Afghan society.

9. Foreign organisation should provide financial assistance and services particular help for teacher-training programmes, methodology techniques etc.

Future of Afghan studies

In recent years, several previously-active Afghanistan studies organizations, publications, and other facilities in the West have either curtailed their activities or disappeared altogether. Financial pressures have caused the curtailment even of language teaching programmes, which are essential for new generations of scholars and teachers to continue their research or train new students. The massive physical disruption of Afghan society is mirrored in the disruption and destruction of local culture. Even under these severe strains, some refugee and resistance groups have managed to initiate educational projects for their children, but many aspects of Afghan life are radically altered in exile. Historical and other records and monuments, formerly accessible in Afghanistan, have been destroyed or are no longer accessible to those communities for which they have a great social significance.

Under these conditions, it is important that resources for research and documentation on Afghanistan located outside the country not be weakened any further. To maximize the usefulness of remaining resources, the workshop recommended a newsletter be initiated to strengthen communications and facilitate cooperation among Afghan scholars and foreign scholars of Afghanistan. The newsletter will be published two or three times a year, and will be available by subscription. Seed money will be sought for a first issue to be distributed gratis to interested scholars, world-wide. The newsletter will publish announcements and short reports of conferences, notices and short reviews of scholars' books and articles, calls for scholarly assistance and papers, notices of individuals' work in progress and reports on the activities of study centers, libraries, and longer-term projects. The success of the newsletter will depend on contributions from its readers. Jadwiga Pstrusinka offered to begin the newsletter.

The workshop consider that a well-supported newsletter is the first step in the creation of a stronger network of Afghanistan scholars and interested institutions. In the not-too-distant future, it may be possible to tap that strengthened network, to create a research centre to serve the needs of the group, with supervision and financial support from a consortium of institutional members. This facility could supply administrative support and access to resources both for individual scholars and for larger, collaborative projects. Access to facilities for Afghan scholars cut off from their former research and teaching institutions is a particular priority. When feasible, such an organization could redirect its resources to help with the restoration of scholarly institutions inside Afghanistan.

<u>Recommendation for refugee research</u>

Refugees have become a major humanitarian concern in many parts of the world. Therefore the study of refugees is of vital importance. The meeting made the following suggestions:

1. One focus of research should be on the macro political and economic problems world-wide that are responsible for the refugee migration.

2. An analysis of the impact of the refugees in the host country which would include on examination of refugees costs for the host country; a study of the refugee ethnic, class, and social background and how they contribute to refugee integration or repatriation.

3. To be concerned with more than just the biological care of the refugees and therefore to help the refugees preserve their cultural, linguistic, social, and folkloric traditions.

4. To collect data on the life of the refugees before their flight so that comparisons can be made of cultural changes.

5. To recognise that refugee situations change quickly and therefore research needs to be done quickly and results should be reported rapidly.

6. To be mindful always of the moral obligations of researchers to:

   a. Include refugees in the research design, planning and execution and to encourage refugee communities to do research themselves. In this regard we propose that researchers working on Afghanistan make every effort to incorporate Afghan refugees who have the skills, training, and knowledge into their research and who are now in exile in Pakistan.

   b. Researchers should be very cautious regarding contract work to make sure that the work is done only for organizations that have proper goals and aims, and especially refrain from doing research in situations where research results cannot be made public.

7. Finally there is a need for scholars and refugees to be able to share data and resources. Therefore we applaud the effort of the Refugee Studies Programme at the University of Oxford to establish a network of people working on refugees around the world, to start a journal [Journal of Refugee Studies, Oxford University Press] and to provide a place for the study of refugees. We support further action in this direction.

Afghans and assess the ability of the receiving societies to deal with them;

3. To examine the impact of such displacement on Afghan culture and the implications of substantial cultural change;
4. To examine the political and economic implications of the Afghan migration both for the societies receiving refugees (mainly Pakistan and Iran) and for Afghanistan itself;
5. To identify areas in which further research is urgently required;
6. To make concrete recommendations to be made available to those involved in assistance to the Afghan refugees for the formulation of policy in each affected area, and
7. To publish materials on these topics to provide basic reference material for policy-makers and scholars.

## Before the Exodus

A retrospective examination of the social and political conditions prevailing in Afghanistan prior to the Soviet invasion dwelt mainly on the minorities issue. The traditional reliance by government on Pashtuns was felt by many speakers to be a fundamental error. It had led to the alienation of ethnic minorities, many of whom had been discriminated against in education and employment and denied resources for meaningful economic development. Some still carried the scars of these experiences. Though fearful of the consequences of airing the problem in public, they considered it necessary to do so in order to avoid future similar discrimination. Islam was recognized as a force for unity, but not to the extent that it obliterated all sense of ethnic loyalty and identity.

There was debate concerning the extent of Pashtun dominance, some arguing it should not be exaggerated. It had been defused if not entirely removed following the development of a new educational system based on a secular curriculum. The introduction of foreign aid had accelerated this process by

making education more widely available in non-Pashtun areas. The result was the emergence of an elite representative of a number of ethnic groups, whose loyalties tended to be directed toward the state rather than toward tribal and religious ties. It was also claimed that the granting of favourable treatment to Pashtuns had been selective. Not all Pashtun districts had benefitted from government-sponsored development projects: some, indeed, probably fared worse in this respect than certain minority areas.

An assertion by one of the principal speakers that the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government was the first to address seriously the minorities issue provoked a vigorous response. Some challenged the thesis. Others accepted it, but questioned the regime's motives. There was a general view that the PDPA and its Soviet ally would pursue any means of gaining influence and undermining the resistance movement. Their policy was aimed at exacerbating rather than resolving minority grievances. The recent creation of a Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities should be seen in this light. Its purpose is to divide and rule through the continuation and promotion of ethnic differences. Even some Pashtun tribes are being used in this way. Against this background, it was suggested that western friends of Afghanistan would do well to moderate their own tendency to distinguish between different groups of Afghans, a practice which was both divisive and backward-looking.

The linkage between national unity and the struggle against the Soviet Union was acknowledged. In this context, credit was given to the resistance leaders in Pakistan for their achievement in, at least, forging the two Alliances. Even so, there was some concern that more could be done to consult minorities both inside Afghanistan and in the refugee camps about the Alliances' aspirations and tactics. Only by reassuring minorities that their interests are not being overlooked can the Alliance persuade them that ethnic rivalries should be subordinated, for the time being at least, to the cause of national resistance.

## Life in Exile

Apart from the special needs of women refugees, which are discussed below, the aspects of life in exile which attracted most attention were the quality of health and education facilities. Not surprisingly, the former was a much less controversial topic than the latter. Indeed, evidence was offered which purported to show that, so far as infant mortality and malnutrition were concerned, refugees in Pakistan have had a better record and better access to health care services than in the past and than their compatriots in rural Afghanistan today. The main problem with the latter has been one of malnourishment brought on by lack of knowledge, not lack of food. To a lesser extent this has also been the case in refugee camps where improved health education, even among more affluent families, is badly needed. There is a desperate need, too, for female doctors; or, in their continued absence, for a relaxation in the rules of female seclusion (chadori). A BBC health care programme designed to educate refugees on how to make the best use of available facilities has attracted an encouraging response from health workers as well as ordinary listeners. It was thought that the lessons learned from this and other schemes would be valuable to refugees when they eventually returned to their homes inside Afghanistan.

It was claimed that there are almost no educational facilities for girls in the camps and that those for boys are either inadequate or inappropriate. Two kinds of school exist side by side: official institutions, run by the Pakistani authorities with UNHCR backing, employ Urdu as the teaching medium; informal schools, set up by refugees, teach in the Pashtu language. There was some dispute as to which catered for the most pupils, with the mujahideen claiming 47,000 out of a total enrolment of 90,000. The Pakistanis for their part credited the Pashtu schools with providing at most 10,000 places. The significance of this particular 'numbers game' became apparent when resistance spokesmen called on the international agencies, including the UNHCR, to concentrate their support on Afghan schools. They stressed the importance of

refugees being left free to educate their own children in accordance with Afghan traditions and needs, not to some western pattern. All help from abroad would be gratefully received, but interference in the cultural and spiritual aspects of education could not be tolerated. In the same vein, there was muted criticism of attempts by foreign missionaries to convert some refugees to Christianity, though this was not seen as a current problem.

Afghans living inside Afghanistan were said to share the view that education should be regarded as a high priority. This has not always been the case. The initial expectations of the resistance that the war would be short-lived had at times led them to destroy schools on the grounds that they were being used as propaganda centres by the PDPA regime. The view in some mujahideen quarters had been that it made more sense to deny children access to education than to allow them to undergo communist indoctrination. Sovietization of this kind still continues and has been taken a step further by the 'abduction' of some children for education in the Soviet Union. However, this development and the protracted nature of the war has obliged resistance leaders to reconsider their position. There is now widespread recognition that all forms of education ought to be promoted. As a consequence, some 200 schools have recently been established in liberated areas of Afghanistan with the assistance of aid agencies. Through its newly-formed Education High Council, financed by the USA, the Alliance has proposed to embark on a major programme of its own, including the training of teachers. Their immediate plan, supported by six of the seven parties, is to open 600 new schools inside Afghanistan.

The difficulties experienced by refugees in seeking to complete their higher education in other countries were briefly touched upon. Malaysia was named as the only foreign country currently running a programme specifically for Afghan students. Places are not readily available elsewhere. The withdrawal by the British Council of its scholarship programme for Afghans was regretted. But the Indian government's practice of requiring students wishing to continue their studies in India to first produce a certificate from the

Afghan Embassy in New Delhi confirming their level of education was bitterly condemned.

## Women Refugees

Participants agreed that while all Afghans have been adversely affected by life in exile, the changes experienced by women refugees have been unusually traumatic. According to a UN survey, women constitute over half of the refugee population, and a fifth of all families have a female income earner. In 10 per cent of these cases, the woman was the principal breadwinner. This was thought to be all the more surprising in that women, as much as men, had expected their exile to be of short duration and had sought to arrange their lives accordingly. This was reflected, among other things, in the size of the accommodation they were prepared to settle for. In most cases, living quarters were markedly more cramped than they had been accustomed to in Afghanistan. Because of this, few women were able to fulfill their normal housekeeping obligations.

The social environment in Pakistan was seen to be another complicating factor. In particular, the host community's attitude to female seclusion was felt to inhibit some of the activities Afghan women had traditionally engaged in at home. Female seclusion had been reinforced in the camps, partly out of deference to stricter local customs and partly because of the presence of Pakistani men.

Women have tended to suffer disproportionately from this digression from previously clearly defined rules. One side effect has been a sharp rise in depression and ill-health. Initially, camp clinics proved unequal to the task of coping with the causes and symptoms of stress among women. Doctors and nurses were invariably male, and funds for the Afghan Medical Aid Programme for Women were, reportedly, either misused or not allocated to women's activities. It was suggested that there was, too, a lack of interest and support for the programme among the leadership in Peshawar. The present situation was

considered to be still far from ideal, but distinctly better than in the recent past. Resistance leaders had honoured their commitment to ensure that clinics earmarked for women were used exclusively by women. Unfortunately, although few women possessed suitable qualifications for helping in these clinics, they could play useful supportive roles, for example, working in the clinics as interpreters.

It was pointed out that inside Afghanistan men and women have often fought side by side. More often than not, women and children have been the main victims of attacks on villages by government and Soviet forces. Unlike their menfolk, they have been unable on such occasions to flee to the hills. Here too, medical care for women has been far from adequate. Before the war TB and malaria had been under control: now they are raging. The same is true of children's diseases such as measles, for which immunisation is rarely available. Epidemics have claimed many lives. Regrettably, it has proved virtually impossible to persuade qualified staff to venture over the border to work inside Afghanistan. Female doctors have experienced particular difficulties because of the requirement for them to be accompanied by a male relative

A few speakers urged agencies interested in improving the conditions of Afghan women to show more respect for Afghan traditions and religious customs. Changes have been occurring as a consequence of the war, but western behaviour and attitudes are still alien. One regional leader resident in Afghanistan voiced the view that, in his district, not only did women not feel subjugated, they were actually content with their lot, and that in some respects they lead happier lives than their counterparts in the West. They certainly did not aspire to the comforts and privileges enjoyed by the latter. There was consensus that the role of women in Afghan society should not be judged by European standards. If the agencies did not take account of such sensitivities, their attempts to encourage progress in certain acceptable areas would be unsuccessful.

The expression of such attitudes by Afghan men were interpreted by a number of western-educated Afghan women who also participated in the symposium discussions as evidence that they were not welcome to return to Afghanistan for the time being. They did, however, accept that there was a role for them either in the camps or as spokespeople in the West for the refugee cause.

Impact on Host Countries

The session that addressed itself to the implications of large refugee communities for host countries was arguably the most contentious. It is estimated that about one-third of the population of Afghanistan is now in exile. The largest number, some 3 million people, are settled in camps in Pakistan. Approximately 2 million are thought to have fled to Iran. In neither country have refugees been welcomed with open arms. At best they have been tolerated. At worst they have been resented and feared by host communities and regarded as useful scapegoats by local governments and politicians. Mutual misunderstanding and misperception have seemed to be the norm.

The Pakistani representation at the symposium was vocal and thought-provoking. It served, in particular, as a reminder that the consequences of the war for Pakistan, in terms of both domestic and international politics, were far-reaching. It also served to warn refugees against taking Pakistani hospitality for granted, or underestimating the sacrifices already made by their hosts.

A few Pakistanis expressed the view that the pressures imposed on Pakistan by the continuation of the war were now unacceptable to the ordinary people of that country. They had not been consulted by their government on this issue or on the related question of refugee camps. To them, the main issue was no longer one of hospitality, but of the wider consequences of the war for Pakistan. There was no malice towards refugees individually, but popular opinion held that the price Pakistan should be called upon to pay must be

A Summary of the Proceedings of
an International Symposium

# THE CRISIS OF MIGRATION FROM AFGHANISTAN: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN IMPLICATIONS

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